

A Winter Paradox

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A blinding snowstorm was sweeping through the night, covering the dark and dreary countryside with a soft, clean blanket of feathery white crystals. The icy flakes drove earthward with an uncontrollable centripetal force. The madly swirling snowflakes were mounting higher and higher upon the earth's surface; and powerful blasts of howling wind hurled the snow into heaping drifts as it penetrated crevices, clung to fence posts, and weighed down the branches of trees and shrubs. The blinding snow, the piercing wind, and the huge drifts converted the peaceful countryside into a treacherous plain with many pitfalls.

Amid the fury of the blizzard, a small, half-frozen lad was blindly wandering in search of his home. The snow was so deep that the roads had become indistinguishable; the child was hopelessly lost. Powerful blasts of wind were driving the icy flakes like hundreds of sharply pointed swords into the boy's unprotected face. The freezing wind lashed about his

frail body and drove him headlong from one drift to another. His limbs began to stiffen with cold; his clothes froze to his body; his feet became clumsy with numbness; his eyes froze in a glassy stare. His steps faltered. Another violent blast of snow and wind whirled his frozen body about and plunged it deep into a huge snowbank. There was no floundering or struggling. All feeling had been drained from the ice-coated body.

Suddenly the howling wind ceased. The moon, accompanied by hundreds of twinkling stars, appeared through the velvety blackness. Shimmering moonbeams stretched earthward, illuminating the rustic countryside and giving it the haunting beauty of a fairyland. The huge snowflakes began drifting lazily downward as if they were tiny, white chariots bearing glimmering fairy queens to this new fairyland. There was an expectant hush to the quiet, and a beckoning light from the window of the lad's home reached out across the snow.